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Report of the Secretary-General

ANNEX

Reply dated 28 January 1998 from Obra Católica Portuguesa de Migraçoes

Lisbon, 28 January 1998

Subject: Information on migration in Portugal

I have just received from the Ministry of the Interior of my country the latest statistics concerning immigrants resident here. In response to a request from the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) at Geneva I am sending them to you in view of your present interest in this matter.

In addition, here is some further information:

(a) Our total population currently stands at 9,850,000, including both nationals and foreigners.

(b) After an extraordinary period of legalization, there are not believed to be many illegal residents in the country, although some are still present. Controls by the police at airports are tight. The number of irregulars may be estimated at between 2,000 and 5,000. There are some Africans (Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde) but also people from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

(c) The Portuguese Government has appointed a High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities to protect and promote respect for the rights of foreigners in the country;

Parliament has already approved some legal provisions which seek to prevent racist crimes and afford victims of racism more effective protection of their rights in court;

There are also social support measures for legal immigrants in distress, including entitlement to the same minimum subsistence pension as for nationals under the same conditions.

(d) Certain political rights may also be exercised in municipal elections when there is reciprocal treatment in the countries of origin of the persons concerned providing the same rights for Portuguese living there.

(e) In Portugal a number of cases of racist violence have occurred in the streets, including three resulting in one death in each instance. These are isolated and rare cases. Some discrimination is, however, to be noted in recruitment (certain types of work) and rents for housing.

Annex: photocopies of statistics*

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* Available for consultation upon request in the Secretariat files.